

Buick Assembly Line Last Word In Auto Making

New System Breaks All Records for Speed and Accuracy

Buick's new "unified line," an assembly system said to be unrivaled for speed and economy, is now in full operation after over a year of planning and building. This assembly system, completely housed under one roof, is capable of turning out over thirteen hundred complete automobiles each day.

The plant engineers and officials who planned and built the new assembly system say that their purpose was to obtain the most speed and economy in the assembly operation consistent with the rigid standards of quality maintained in the past. How well this purpose has been accomplished is shown by the fact that between 885 and 900 men, with the aid of the new system, are able to assemble eleven hundred complete automobiles each day. This places the actual cost of assembling each car at a figure less than the wage of one man for one day, as far as the labor item is concerned.

Costs Cut

This is but one of the many costly items that figure in the price of the completely assembled car, however. Another expensive and difficult problem for any automobile plant is to get materials to the assembly line at the lowest possible handling cost. In the case of Buick this means handling over two hundred tons every hour.

In order to do this with the most efficiency and at lowest cost, an array of elaborate and intricately designed conveyors, all of them designed and built by Buick engineers, are incorporated in the "unified line." From the engine plant, more than half a mile away, comes a steady stream of finished and tested valve-in-head engines. They come in a covered tunnel on an endless chain, over buildings and around corners. So perfectly is this conveyor built that it takes only one and a half horsepower to operate it. It is said to be the longest conveyor in the world.

It can be readily seen that any delay in the operation of the assembly system will necessarily delay all other operations throughout the plant. Yet the system has proved itself so efficient that the "float" stock kept on hand to take care of unfortunate delays, has been reduced more than 50 percent. Thus unity in manufacturing is centered on and directed toward a completely unified assembly system.

Three in One

The "unified line" in reality consists of three assembly lines, located in a building 64 feet wide. This fact alone speaks volumes for the efficiency of the system. When Buick engineers proposed to operate three assembly lines in a space only 64 feet wide they were told that it was impossible; that other companies had trouble operating even one line in a space that narrow. But thanks to the efficient manner in which materials are delivered to the "unified line," by both gravity and power conveyors, the space available has proved more than ample. There is no interruption in assembly from the time the bare frame is started at one end until the finished car is driven away under its own power at the other. All assembly operations are performed on the line.

Buick builds chassis of three lengths, and two engine sizes. There are eighteen domestic body styles, several export right-hand drives, many different paint combinations of bodies and wheels, two sizes of steering gears, transmissions, axles, brakes, gasoline tanks, fenders, etc. There are three styles of headlamps, and scores of other differences to consider. About the only factor which simplifies the system is the fact that Buick builds chassis of identical quality and design.

A frame for a chassis of 123 inches wheelbase starts at the riveting bays. Throughout its long journey through thousands of assembly operations it must in every case receive exactly the right part for this particular chassis. It must receive the proper engine, axles, springs, steering gear, wheels painted the proper color, and so on. Yet materials are so promptly delivered to the line, and in the right order, that there is never a mistake made; never a hitch in the smooth progress of assembling the car.

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At said hour of eight (8) o'clock P. M., April 5, 1927, said bids or proposals will be opened at the regular meeting of said Board of Trustees, in the Council Chamber in the City of Torrance, California.

By order of the Board of Trustees of the said City of Torrance.

Dated, March 5, 1927.

A. H. BARTLETT,
City Clerk of the City of Torrance.

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